

Rebooting And Renewing Alberta's Political Scene ■ 4



CRAZY ABOUT HORROR

FEBRUARY 18, 2010
ISSUE 847

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GOING TO THE CRAZIES
Romero may be the king of zombies,
but Eisner's re-imagining of The Crazies
takes it to a whole new level.

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SEE Magazine is located at:
#200, 10275 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta, T5J 1B8
TEL: (780) 438-9000
FAX: (780) 432-7002
e-mail: info@seemagazine.ca
Publication Mail Agreement No. 420692/04
Return Address: Canadian Address: The Circulation Dept.
25 Oglethorpe Avenue, St. Albert, Alberta, T8N 5A5
e-mail: reader@seemagazine.ca

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• **READER POLL** • Should bar owners be
responsible for patrons who leave the club?



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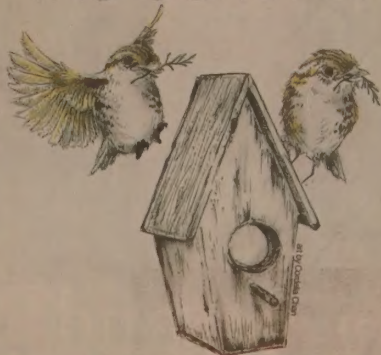
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NEWS • POLITICS

Looking to

AB FUTURE

Reboot and Renew Alberta Politics

“THE CYNICISM, INDIFFERENCE AND DISDAIN WE HAVE FOR CONVENTIONAL POLITICS IS A LUXURY WE CAN'T AFFORD ANYMORE.”

ILLUSTRATION BY JASON BILMNER

Reboot Alberta 2.0 will be held Feb. 26-28 at the Delta Lodge in Kananaskis. Go to rebootalberta.com for more information.

For the statement of principles and other information on Renew Alberta, go to www.renewalberta.ca.

POLITICALLY ACTIVE ALBERTANS AIMING TO SHAKE UP OUR MORIBUND PARTY SCENE

BY MAURICE TOUGAS

Alberta politics, for decades the most placid in Canada, is suddenly rolling.

The defection of two Tories to the Wildrose Alliance and its telegraphic leader Danielle Smith, combined with the plummeting popularity of Premier Ed Stelmach, has made the impossible seem possible — the Tories can be beaten.

But other Albertans are discouraged with the notion of changing one right-wing party for another.

A pair of political movements with similar goals and similar names — Reboot Alberta and Renew Alberta — have been quietly working behind the headlines to alter the Alberta political landscape. Although the two groups are not connected, they share a common goal — fundamentally changing Alberta politics.

REBOOT ALBERTA

A card-carrying Progressive Conservative since 1970, Ken Chapman let his PC party membership lapse last year. In his view, the Tory party after the Lougheed no longer exists.

Chapman was initially attracted to the social progressive and fiscal conservative mix of the Lougheed days.

"Many people use it as an oxymoron; I saw it as an important balance," Chapman says.

But after nearly 40 years as a party member, Chapman is through. The Stelmach government's controversial Bill 44 — the legislation that would allow teachers to be taken to court if parents were offended by what they taught — was the last straw for him.

"They've gone too far right, too far fundamentalist, and they're pandering to people whose values don't need to be pandering to purely for political reasons and not for public policy reasons," he says.

Chapman found himself a man without a party. The New Democrats were too far left, the Greens were an option until they "imploded," and the Liberals were "stillborn, with no traction and no momentum."

"All of the conventional parties have lost their way. They're all about gaining, sustaining and retaining power on a political model that is no longer about public service and no longer about wisdom and judgment. It's all about messaging and manipulating and controlling."

Michael Brechtel was feeling similarly adrift after the last election.

Brechtel grew up in an environment where dinner table conversation included such taboo topics as politics and religion.

"I grew up in an environment where those were the most important things we talked about, and those were the things we needed to understand," says Brechtel, 30, an account supervisor at an advertising and public relations agency. Those dinner table conversations forced him to think about who he was voting for, and why.

But, growing up in a province dominated by one party — he's never voted in an election where there was any chance of change — "it felt like knowledge didn't matter. Whatever you voted, it wasn't going to change the party that was running the province."

Feeling disconnected from politics, Brechtel found himself spending time talking to other like-minded friends and acquaintances, like Chapman, former PC cabinet minister turned Liberal Dave King, and retired CEO of the University of Alberta Hospital, Don Schurman. Looking for ways to kick start Alberta's moribund political system, the four decided to reach out to their web of contacts and spend a weekend together to "talk about what we could do, and how to get other people engaged."

The idea took hold, and the first of Reboot Alberta conference was held last November, with about 90 participants. The demographic mix couldn't have been much better — Rebooters about half were under age 40 and half over, with men, women and minorities well represented.

"It was exciting to see that people were ready to engage again," says Brechtel.

A number of streams of thought emerged from the meeting, from forming a new political party to changing the existing parties from within. The conversations were inspiring, says Brechtel, particularly when a collection of diehard party supporters got together for a discussion.

"It was the coolest thing," Brechtel recalls. "They had this unbelievably respectful dialogue. It blew my mind."

The Rebooters aren't advocating the end of political parties, or necessarily the formation of a new one, although a substantial number of Reboot participants are in favour of forming a new party. But parties, Brechtel feels, have lost touch with the public.

"Right now, it doesn't feel like you're being listened to, it doesn't feel like your views are being respected, it doesn't feel

like the people who are at the top of those parties have any appreciation for your daily life."

Reboot is holding its second conference, Reboot 2.0, in Kananaskis Feb. 26-27, but it won't be just a bunch of like-minded progressives lamenting the state of democracy. One of the things Brechtel would like to see from the conference is a definition of what a "progressive" is.

"It's a loaded word," he says. "That's something we spent a lot of time on at the first conference."

A study of what are the driving values of progressives in Alberta will be released during the Reboot conference.

Whereas the first conference centred around how the participants might get engaged, this one will result in "actionable items," Brechtel says.

The bottom line of the Reboot process, says Brechtel, is to "help Albertans reengage with the political process, and reassert their citizenship."

Reboot, says Chapman, is an opportunity for "people to reengage and dust off their citizenship."

"The cynicism, indifference and disdain we have for conventional politics is a luxury we can't afford anymore."

The 60 per cent of Albertans who didn't vote in the last election "are drifting; they don't know where to go and don't know what's happening to their democracy."

"It's not about picking winners or losers," says Chapman. "It's about bringing citizens back into the politics of their time, and helping design the Alberta of the future, living up to our potential, and doing that through changing political culture."

RENEW ALBERTA

Chima Nkemdirim, a Calgary lawyer, was a dedicated Alberta Liberal until election night 2008.

Despite personal success — Nkemdirim was campaign manager for successful Calgary Liberal candidate Kent Hehr — Nkemdirim was profoundly disappointed with the overwhelming Tory victory. The election result proved to him that no existing opposition party would be able to form government.

"Albertans had no alternative," Nkemdirim says. "People who were dissatisfied voted with their feet by not showing up at the polls," resulting in the lowest voter turnout in Alberta history. The election result, that saw the Liberals reduced to just nine seats, marked the beginning of the end of Nkemdirim's party membership.

"I've given up on the Liberals," says Nkemdirim, who had been a member for about 20 years. "I just don't think it's in their DNA to transform themselves into an organization that can win an election. They've got really nice people, but I think it's clear from the last election that Albertans are saying, no, we're not interested in going in the direction that you are."

Nkemdirim, along with other politically active Albertans, arrived at the conclusion that the only chance for change in Alberta was through a new party. In Alberta's history only once has the official opposition party (the Lougheed Conservatives in 1971) gone on to win an election.

Nkemdirim and others from across the political spectrum talked for about a year about how to form a new, centrist party.

POLITICS cont'd on p. 5

POINT OF VIEW - EDMONTON

Lessons Learned in 2010



MY TOWN SCOTT LINGLEY
ON THE SUPERFLEA MARKET,
WILCO, DOG PARKS AND HOW
DRINKING CAN EXPAND YOUR
BRAINPOWER

Five things I learned from My Town so far in 2010

1. Drinking can be educational. A researcher at the U of A's Centre for Health Promotion Studies found that it's common among frequent drinkers to believe that the world at large drinks as much as they do and, indeed, that social drinking generally entails getting drunk. Hence they feel getting sozzled is normal social behaviour and may even feel obliged by protocol in some settings to drink

on and brace yourself for a stream of lame jokes if your name happens to be Pete. Oh, and take a cab.

2. The Superflea Market is a public monument to squalor syndrome: Pass under its yellow canopies on 11th Avenue near 120th Street and you'll discover a gallery of new, old and discarded (then fetched out of the dumpster for resale) dreams to which nothing else is the City of Champs compares. Slowly turning, like 50-cent hotdogs on one of those concession-stand-slow-roasting-weiner racks, in its own hebeptic microcosm where marketing amounts to assembling your product into to unspectacular a pile as possible, the Superflea is a jaw-dropping labyrinth of dross harvested from God knows where. I mean really where did all that stuff come from, the infinity of small brass animal ornaments, the corridor lined with shelves overflowing with jigsaw puzzles, a 10-foot-wide artwork featuring the face of Bob Marley repeated in various atti-

tudes of smoking a joint, the wall of wooden Buddha masks, right next to miniature horror fountains with little vaporizers that spill funeral mist? And from whence all the swords and beef jerky? And the bookshelf made from a single tree trunk? All I can say is round up some friends and make your way to the Superflea (weekends 10-5) where the pop cultural past and present coexist in mind-throttling detail. And if the Superflea is, as I believe, an oracle of obsolescence, the DVD format's days are numbered.

3. Dogs are Prozac on four legs: February getting you down? You don't need a stiff drink or a Xanax, you need a trip to your local dog park. Now emburdened with my own

hound, I devote the time I once reserved for myself to take her to the Laurier dog park, where she can piddle all over nature, get chased and wrangled by other dogs and come home slaked and slobbered on. The parade of poodles, tongues and tails awaggle, frolicking together as only dogs can buoy the winter-afflicted spirit, people are friendly but observe dog park etiquette and confine small talk to dog-related topics, and though the snow is leprous with the despoliments of countless canines, that stretch of woods and fields along the river is a beautiful spot to stroll. Plus it's free, and no dog is required to gain admittance.

4. Wilco is the greatest band of the 21st century so far. Maybe this insight isn't Edmonton-specific, but the Chicago-based band proved definitively at the Jubilee Auditorium on Family Day that the only thing more impressive than the corpus of work they've amassed over the last decade is the thrilling power

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POLITICS (cont'd from p. B4)

The party has a "statement of principles" in place (www.renewalberta.ca) that serves as the bedrock of the party. The nuts and bolts of policy, however, will come from the membership.

"Here are the six guideposts where we fall in the political spectrum," Nkemdirim says of the "what we believe" section of the website. "How we develop those, and how we turn those into policies, that's really up to you (the membership)," says Nkemdirim.

"We're coming in with a blank slate, except for those guideposts."

The party isn't even asking people to join, at least not yet. Right now, it is seeking input from the public about

what the party should look like.

"We want to lower the barrier to wards entry into politics," he says, noting that less than two per cent of Canadians are members of political parties.

"Hopefully though that process, people will get more involved and say, 'Yes, I really want to join'."

The party is about to kick off what is tentatively being called the "listening campaign", consisting of house parties of interested individuals. After the listening process, the party hopes to have a policy convention, followed by a leadership convention in early 2011 in time to have a leader in place a year before the next election.

"Our goal is to create a party that is built to win."

Also in the process right now is a petition campaign to get official party status, which Nkemdirim says it's pretty simple. Only 7,200 names are required, and membership is not a requirement to sign the petition.

Public opinion polls that show the Wildrose Alliance ahead of the Conservatives in voter support have not deterred Nkemdirim; in fact, he says Wildrose leader Danielle Smith has done his fledgling party a favour.

"She has really broken the idea that there is always going to be a Conservative dynasty. Now people are talking, for the first time in my lifetime, that a government can change."

A Great Way To Test Out Ethiopian Cuisine



WEDNESDAY NIGHT VEGGIE BUFFET PROVIDES AN INTRO INTO THE WORLD OF ETHIOPIAN DINING

MEHESHA ETHIOPIAN & ERTREAN CUISINE
955-1000 Ave. 780-424-2206

BY SCOTT LINGLEY

If you're feeling daunted by the prospect of trying Ethiopian food for the first time, even as opportunities to do so proliferate across the city, Habesha's Wednesday night vegetarian buffet affords the newbie a tidy snapshot typical of the multi-hued stew-tubs of the Ethiopian kitchen.

Habesha's modest confines turn out to be surprisingly large when you head to the washroom and notice the

row of partitioned rooms hazy with shesha smoke, a drily fruity smell I confess to finding pleasant. But you won't even notice it in the cozier dining area where the chafing dishes await.

My own experience is that Ethiopians know their way around beef, goat, lamb, chicken and fish, and distinctive dishes like kitfo — sort of a spicy steak tartar — and special tibbs, which is a diced beef cooked with spices, peppers and onions. Still, I've always been more attracted to their meatless stews and simmered veggies, so Habesha's weekly offer of as much of that as I could hold for \$14.99 sounded like a good fit with my predispositions.

I was quick to find out they could also slake my curiosity about Kenyan lager by serving me a pint bottle of Tusker for \$6. I would not necessarily encourage using up valuable stomach space a pint of Kenyan lager if you're looking to derive maximum

value from the buffet.

That spongy, slightly sour pancake is called injera and there's a big basket of it at the head of Habesha's buffet table. I'd recommend unrolling a piece across your plate and putting the piles and pools of food right on the injera, which is how Ethiopian food is usually served, at least as far as Ethiopian restaurants in Edmonton go. That way you've got a piece of bread soaked in the flavours of the meal to finish up. As if you'll have any room left.

The buffet allows you to take in a good swath of Habesha's veggie menu including traditional faves like stewed greens (gomem), string beans, carrots and potatoes sim-

mering in garlic and spices (fosalia), two kinds of lentil stew, chunks of potato in spicy gravy and cabbage and carrots stewed with turmeric. There was also a vinegary-beet salad and leaf lettuce salad for something that needed a little more chewing.

There are so many distinct textures and flavours in an Ethiopian meal to soak up with injera, from the complexity imparted by berbere,

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TRY THE: WEDNESDAY NIGHT VEG BUFFET
BEWARE: THE BELLY-BURSTING PROPERTIES OF INJERA

snarf your sauce-imbed meal mat. Because man, that fluffy bread sure takes up a lot of room in your belly.

For more eating tips and a glimpse of what the rest of Habesha's menu has to offer you can visit habeshacuisine.com.

Or you can loosen your belt and proceed straight to the restaurant for a hands-on primer. Because haven't you waited long enough?

NEWS BRIEFS

COMMENTARY • STUFF YOU MIGHT HAVE MISSED

EVEN COOLER RUNNINGS

Remember the story of the Jamaican bobbleheads from the Calgary Olympics, immortalized in the John Candy film *Cool Runnings*? Turns out that at least one of those guys wasn't just a flash in the bobblehead. Lascelles Brown will be participating in the Vancouver Olympics, but this time for Canada — he became a Canadian citizen just weeks before competing in the Turin Olympics. He races on Saturday.

THIS IS PROGRESS?

In another giant step forward towards total equality, America has its first legal male prostitute. His name is Markus, and he works legally out of the Shady Lane Ranch brothel in Goldfield, Nev. His clients are strictly women, and he charges \$300 an hour or, if you're short on cash and/or time, \$200 for 40 minutes. In an interview, he compared himself to civil rights giant Rosa Parks, and even to Gandhi, for advancing the cause of a woman's right to do the same disgusting stuff that men get to do. You the man, Markus.

WORST. VALENTINE'S DAY. EVER.

If you had a lousy Valentine's Day, and you're dreading next year, there is hope for next year if you want to leave the country. In Saudi Arabia, Valentine's Day is banned, and the feared religious police launch a crackdown every year looking for red roses, heart-shaped products or any of the usual Valentine clichés. Saudi Arabia is not, clearly, for lovers.

—Maurice Douglas

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—Rick Broadbent in The Times of London, offering a defence of the Vancouver Olympics.

TIME FOR KATZ TO COME CLEAN ON ARENA

"A lot has been said and written over the past few days about our vision for a new downtown arena district. I thought it might be helpful if I were to share some of my thoughts on the matter."

—Daryl Katz, Edmonton
 Oiler owner, in a letter to the Edmonton Journal Feb. 14

Yes, it would be "helpful" if the man who wants the city to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on a new arena for his team would "share some of my thoughts." Unfortunately, Katz's shared thoughts didn't do much to expand our knowledge about the proposed plan.

For those of you following along at home, the initial public impression was that Katz had offered to kick in \$100 million of his own money towards the arena. But last week, a Katz spokesman (the great man never lowers himself to speak directly to the masses) revealed the rough outline of a plan that would include not just a new arena, but a hotel and office complex. Under the new plan, the city would own and finance the arena, and Katz would invest \$100 million in the surrounding development. How would the city finance the arena? According to

Katz, the arena would draw additional investment of \$1 billion, and the tax revenue from those projects would go towards paying for the arena.

But didn't Katz promise \$100 million towards the arena. Not according to his statement. Quoting his own press release from 2008, Katz says "pledged to contribute his time, energy and on the order of \$100 million toward the development of a new downtown arena..." Katz says that sentence doesn't say he will give \$100 towards the arena, but towards "the development" of a new arena, which, to his lawyer's mind, leaves the "specific nature" of the funding open.

So, let's see if we've got this straight. The city builds the arena. Katz then leverages his \$100 million in investment to other buildings to attract more than \$1 billion in additional development, which creates a tax windfall to pay for the arena. See how simple it is?

We don't. The city takes all the risk, hoping that someone will build a hotel we may or may not need, and office buildings we most certainly do not need. The more we think this through, the less sense it makes. Katz is going to need a lot more than just a letter to the editor to sell this pig in a poke.

VERBATIM FROM THE LEGISLATURE

The Legislature is back in session, and this week we offer this thoughtful exchange between expelled P.C. Guy Boutilier and Finance Minister Ted Morton.

Mr. Boutilier: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Communication is the key, the government says. Everyone will communicate better. It's a new team. Albertans will have to take a haircut, and the buffet is closed. Well, the photo which I will table at the appropriate time says: not even a trim.

My question to the minister of finance is this: does he not like haircuts, or is he planning on becoming a long-haired hippie, moving away from his core political values?

Mr. Morton: Mr. Speaker, I've carefully burned all the pictures of me prior to 1975, so I know that the hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo has not seen those pictures. In fact, my haircut has been getting shorter and shorter, and I'm more than happy.

BY THE NUMBERS • COUCH OLYMPICS

CANADIANS ARE WATCHING THE VANCOUVER OLYMPICS IN HUGE NUMBERS
 SOURCE: CTV

23 million Canadians watched some of opening ceremonies

7.3 million watched Alexandre Bilodeau win gold in moguls



POINT OF VIEW • MORE OLYMPICS

Memo to Brit Media: Get Lost



OUTSIDE POLITICS MAURICE TOUGAS
 NOTES ON THE FIRST HALF OF THE OLYMPICS, FROM OPENING CEREMONY TO SNARKY BRITISH MEDIA

I was nervous waiting for the opening ceremonies.

Let's face it, folks. Canada does not do spectacle well. We're too innately modest, too much of a sitting-in-the-back row kind of country to really do a big, over-the-top opening ceremony well. Now, the Chinese at the Beijing Olympics? Now, that was an opening ceremony, the kind of thing only a totalitarian society with bottomless reserves of humanity can pull off.

But danged it if we didn't pretty much pull it off. I found it captivating, even moving in a way that the Beijing event wasn't. It was technically dazzling (whales moving across the B.C. Place floor? Awesome) and happily bereft of most Canadian stereotypes. I fully expected the trip across the Prairies to be horses and

rodeos and cowboy hats, but instead it was a kid running barefoot across a wheatfield. I loved that. Our formerly very own k.d. lang was, as expected, outstanding. She owns Leonard Cohen's elegiac Hallelujah (am I the only person who hasn't got a clue what that song is all about?).

Oh, there were problems. I understand this Nicki Yankofsky girl is a jazz prodigy, and a great singer. But to be honest, she (or more likely, whoever arranged the song) botched the national anthem. Any good anthem is a sing-along song. You don't screw around with it to show what great pipes you've got. Sing it straight and clear and just the way it was written, and everybody gets goose bumps. Anyone who sings a national anthem should remember that it's our song, not yours. And speaking of singers... Bryan Adams? Really? And that song he wrote for the athletes set new standards in trite. (In fact, all of the musical guests were dated. Canada is teeming with young! pretty talent. Where they all busy?) I could also have done without the morbidly obese "slam poet" (although I did enjoy his line that "we say zed here, not zee"), which got a rise from the crowd, half of whom probably say "zee" these days). And I thought the idea of giving First Nations chiefs

head of state status was political correctness run amok. But overall, I was proud of it.

One Canadian cliché survived, however. Quebec politicians and media are in a lather that there wasn't enough French in the ceremony. Certainly Vancouver Olympic Committee CEO John Furlong could have learned a paragraph or two of French in his opening comments to diffuse the entirely predictable "outrage" from Quebec, and some of Donald Sutherland's dramatic narration should have been in français, but overall it's a weak, if entirely expected, complaint.

Of course, there is a pall that hangs over these games like Vancouver's famous gloom, and that is the death of Georgian luge racer Nodar Muanitsili. Since his horrendous death, finger pointing has become an Olympic event. It's Canada's fault for not letting the athletes practice on the track more often. No, it's the fault of the designers of the track. No, it's the fault of the country that sent ill-prepared athletes into an inherently dangerous sport. No, it's Nodar's fault for making mistakes on the run. Fact is, everybody can share in the blame just a bit. Too fast of a track, not enough practice time, and

TOUGAS cont'd on p. 8

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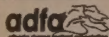
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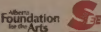
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TOUGAS (cont'd from p. 7)
human error.

Death is a tough act to follow, but the 'snow' must go on (I know, I know ... that's terrible). And speaking of snow, is anyone surprised that there's snow in Vancouver? There's rarely snow in Vancouver, and when it does snow, the whole city curls into the fetal position and whimpers until it melts the next day. I love Vancouver as a backdrop, and it makes Canada look great, but it's no more of a winter city than Seattle.

MEDIA GETS IT WRONG

And speaking of the media — OK, I wasn't, but I have no good segue — we're getting a bit of a spanking from our British betters over our new, in your face Olympic attitude.

The Times of London called Own the Podium "highly unpleasant" and says it has "alienated the world they are supposed to play hosts to." The Guardian said Own the Podium is "another blow struck against its reputation as the kindest, gentlest member of the Olympic community," and that the Canadian Olympic Committee "seemed to have mislaid their manners."

You want mislaid manners? Here's some for you ... screw you, limeys. The British just hate it when a former colony gets all uppity and forgets its place in the world hierarchy. The British just can't get over the fact that they're a former world superpower now reduced to has-been status and surpassed by countries like Canada.

But it's not all bad. Tom Brokaw, on NBC's Olympic pre-ceremony show, gave American viewers a kind of primer on Canada, pointing out that Canada entered the Second World War years ahead of the Americans, that we've have heavy losses in Afghanistan, and that Canada is a country you want in your corner.

Well put, Tom.
mauricetougas@live.com

ADVICE-HEALTH

Beginner's Guide To Reiki



HOLISTIC HEALTH 101 ROBERTA SHEPHERD
WHAT IS REIKI, WHERE DID IT BEGIN, AND WHAT IT CAN DO FOR YOU

Reiki literally means "spiritually guided life force energy." This is based on the combination of the Japanese words 'rei' (meaning higher power) and 'ki' (life force energy).

Reiki is an ancient healing technique. The method involves a practitioner placing hands on or above different areas of the receiver's body and holding them in place without movement. The idea is that pure universal or God energy is coursing through the body of the practitioner into the body of the receiver and goes wherever it needs to be. The purpose of reiki is to facilitate healing. As a practitioner and receiver myself, I will tell you that alongside healing, reiki can and often produces the following results: deep relaxation, repose, insight, pain relief, improved functioning of bodily systems, emotional release, lucid dreaming, improved sleep, improved focus and concentration, and personal advancement.

Reiki originated in 1922. The founder of reiki, Dr. Mikao Usui, was a student of medicine, psychology and religion. An avid businessman with perceptive spiritual inclinations, Dr. Usui discovered reiki while pursuing spiritual training at Mt. Kuma, north-west of Kyoto. Reiki was brought to the west in 1937 by Hawayo Takata, the Hawaiian daughter of Japanese immigrants. Takata had experienced incredible healing at the hands of reiki and was insistent on learning the method. She mentored 22 reiki practitioners before her passing, and those students started the spread of reiki throughout the West. (For further details on the history of Reiki, I recommend Reiki the Healing Touch, by William Rand, or visit Rand's extensively informative website: reiki.org.)

Reiki is often misunderstood and perhaps just as often passionately supported. Though intangible in nature, reiki has the capacity to produce clear benefits. In 2004, the Journal of Alternative & Complementary Medicine printed the results of a random, blind study in which all subjects receiving reiki experienced decreased heart rate and diastolic blood pressure in compari-

son to control and placebo groups. The study indicated that reiki has effect upon the autonomic nervous system. A 2006 issue of the same publication reviewed a study where participants who received four weeks of reiki treatments showed "statistically significant increases in mental functioning, memory and behavior problems" in comparison to a control group. The conclusion of this study indicated that reiki is applicable "for improving behaviour and memory problems in patients with mild cognitive impairment or mild Alzheimer's disease". In 2005, an issue of Orthopaedic Nursing documented a study on energy healing, including reiki, and its efficacy in strengthening the immune system, decreasing pain, accelerating the healing process, reducing anxiety and promoting overall well-being.

It is becoming more common for reiki practitioners to be on staff at hospitals across North America. Recently, Dr. Oz, author and leading New York cardiathoracic surgeon publicized largely by Oprah, promoted reiki on his talk show. Dr. Oz calls reiki "ultimately the most important alternative medicine treatment of all," suggesting that unsolvable medical problems may find reprieve by reiki. The New York Times previously printed that Dr. Oz has allowed reiki to be a part of open-heart surgeries.

Personally, reiki has been a transformative part of my life. Learning the practice of reiki has helped me recognize and establish healthy boundaries in relationships. Giving and receiving reiki helps me to maintain an open mind, a clear head and an ongoing feeling of tranquility. Professionally, I have seen numerous clients approach the receipt of reiki with trepidation, only to come out on the other side of a single session as firm believers and then avid receivers. Furthermore, I have observed positive results in response to reiki applied to the following situations: broken bones, digestive complaint, constipation, exhaustion, anxiety, sleep disturbances, back pain, headaches, labor pain and anxiety, infertility, depression, transition to death, emotional instability, panic attacks ... the list goes on!

Reiki is not associated with any religion, though it can be a valuable component of any spiritual practice. There are a multitude of reiki practitioners, myself included, throughout Edmonton. It is my strong recommendation that you experience the advantages of reiki for yourself. I assure you, with confidence, you won't be dissatisfied.

holistichealth101@gmail.com

HORROR MOVIES • PREVIEWS



Going To The

ROMERO MAY BE THE KING OF ZOMBIES, BUT EISNER'S RE-IMAGINING OF THE CRAZIES TAKES IT TO A WHOLE NEW LEVEL

THE CRAZIES (1973)

Directed by George A. Romero, playing at Metro Cinema, Feb. 19 at 9:15 p.m.

THE CRAZIES (2010)

Directed by Breck Eisner
Wide release, opening Feb. 10

BY KATHLEEN BELL

It's not a zombie movie. Nothing is after anybody's brains and nobody is dead ... yet. The criminal element in this horror flick is not a monster or serial killer, it's a strange, mysterious and incurable disease.

First realized in 1973 by the reigning authority on zombies and their shuffle-step, George A. Romero (*Night of the Living Dead*, *Dawn of the Dead*), *The Crazies* never received the commercial success of Romero's undead oeuvre.

"It's kind of the lost Romero film," explains DEDfest producer and DCD-splotation cinema curator, Derek Clayton. "Everybody loves his zombie flicks but this kind of isn't one of them. He's got a few films that slipped under the radar back in the '70s that were fun little films."

However, once you see the movie, it does make an impression. Set in small town America, the residents are beset on two fronts — with the disease spreading inside the city limits and the military, who want to quarantine the townsfolk, invading from the outside.

Without explanation, foot soldiers sweep the streets, silently capturing residents and taking them to the local high school, where the disease and panic spread that much faster.

The concept is terrifying, and Romero's use of the horror genre to criticize the Vietnam-era military structure in America is smart and swift. "It's very counter-culture," says Clayton, explaining how subversive material fits into a genre that's often known for propagating conservative morals.

"You can get away with a lot more [in horror]. If you're doing a drama and addressing something directly you can get into a lot of hot water sometimes. You're limited by having to tip-toe around certain issues, whereas in horror and sci-fi you can just go full out."

Despite its ambitious scope, I have to

admit, you can't escape the fact that it was made in the '70s on a shoestring budget and it's hard to look past the protagonist's red polyester turtleneck.

But because the idea is so strong, the film not only leaves itself open to a remake, it's deserving of one.

ENTER THE CRAZIES.

VERSION 2010...

"The fact that I even remembered it, remembered the plot, the concept and the world was significant for me when I was first approached about re-imagining the movie," says (the new) *The Crazies* director Breck Eisner (*Sahara*) over the phone from California.

"The part that stuck with me was your neighbours, your friends, your family going crazy. One of my favourite horror movies of all time was [John] Carpenter's remake of *The Thing* and, for me, it tapped into a similar basic primal human fear, which is that of someone you trust and love turning on you."

Though that core concern remains the same, Eisner knew there was room for improvement. "I wouldn't be interested in remaking a movie that was perfect, that had everything going for it or that I really love. With *The Crazies*, I really liked the concept and I liked a lot of the elements in the movie and there's some great things that he did in the movie, but it ultimately suffered from a lack of resources."

With Romero hanging around as executive producer, you may be wondering how exactly Eisner's re-imagining, as he calls it, went over with the classic director and pop-culture icon.

But Eisner is so enthusiastic about the entire project, *The Crazies* seem uniquely safe in his care. He's invested in and deeply attentive to, not only the concept, but also the characters, the town, and the social environment where the military, charged with the protection of its citizens, is also the source of their fear.

"When we started developing the movie we were well into the period of the George Bush presidency, the invasion of Iraq, the misguided wars and the distrust of politicians using the military for their own personal reasons," he elaborates.

"It felt to me like the world we were living in, the post-9/11 world, was very similar to that post-Vietnam world that Romero originally made the movie in."

Eisner goes so far as to have evolu-

tionary theory regarding the manifestation of the disease.

"As human beings have changed over the millennia, I think, there's these things called latent DNA and latent cells that are the left over vestiges of a more violent society — a fight to survive and a fight to hunt in this more animalistic world," he says. "Deeply ingrained in the DNA of a human being is this animal type quality, this rage-induced power that exists — like waking a sleeping dog. I don't really believe it's something that's necessarily caused by society as much as it's caused by being this animal, this creature that we are and that we've tamed over time."

That's craftsmanship.

THE STUFF THAT MAKES US CRAZY...

It makes you wonder, though, what kind of person invests that much thought into the specifics of mass mutilations, living putrefaction and serial terrorization?

"My mom asked me that question," says Eisner with a quiet chuckle. "Where do you come up with this stuff? It's terrifying! Awful."

Except Eisner's not ghoulish — he seems to be a genuinely nice guy. He's passionate about his day job and he even gives me a little free advice vis-à-vis my ambition to one day ooze near the spotlight as a dead extra. "In terms of dead extras, that's a terrible job, just so you know," he says. "We have a scene where there are about 12 dead extras in a meat freezer. I wanted the meat locker to be cold so I'd see the breath of the actress, Radha Mitchell, when she went in. So these poor actors were trying not to shiver — as they were dead. And in the meat locker, once they get into position, they can't really move and that lasts for maybe ten hours. So it's not as cool as you might think."

But as a horror movie director, he's gotta scare himself every once and awhile. "The only thing that's scary on a horror movie [set] is not making your day or not being prepared for the next day," he says.

And the thing about *The Crazies*... you're afraid of friends, afraid of your neighbours, but the most frightening part is the stuff that comes from within. Like I said, this is not a zombie movie, this is about the stuff that makes us crazy.

Disease drives 'em crazy in the update of the classic Romero film | PHOTO SUPPLIER

ROMANIAN POLICE • REVIEW

Of Paperwork And Procedure

Cartoon Shocker



Dragos Bucur brings personable life and humour to this Romanian police flick. (PHOTO SUPPLIED)

NO ONE EXPECTS IT TO BE FUNNY, BUT THIS POLICE PROCEDURAL HAS THE DRIEST WIT THAT MAKES IT A GEM

POLICE, ADJECTIVE

Directed by Corneliu Porumboiu, starring Dragos Bucur
Moxo Cinema (Zeldis Hall, The Citadel), Feb. 18-22
★★★★☆

BY MICHAEL HINGSTON

Cristi works as a quiet but diligent police officer in small-town Romania, and like all cops, a big chunk of his job involves filling out paperwork. This is dull stuff in the best of times, but the kind of reports Cristi (Dragos Bucur) generates are downright admirable in their commitment to banality. He's been assigned to tail three teenagers on suspicions of minor drug trafficking, and after eight days of rigorous investigation, all he has to show for it are eye-glazing documents full of statements like "For the next three hours nothing happened."

Indeed, not much happens during *Police, Adjective*, either, which is the second film from Romanian director Corneliu Porumboiu. (His debut, *12:08 East of Bucharest*, won the Camera d'Or award at Cannes in 2006.) Yet it's a gripping piece of cinema nonetheless, and its power comes from how starkly and wittily it deconstructs the genre of the police procedural — fully half of the running time shows Cristi standing around, waiting in vain for the teenagers to emerge from their houses, or else shuffling through the halls of the detachment, haranguing various co-workers to run background checks and in each case being given a list of reasons why he can't happen as quickly as he'd like. Compared to this, the cops in *The Wire* seem almost hyperactive.

There is one important strain of tension, though: Cristi wants to hang back and wait for the real dealer — he suspects it's one of the teen's older brothers — to reveal himself, while his bosses are antsy to close the case and move Cristi onto something more substantial. The quickest way

to do the latter is via a sting operation, which would at best result in a few bush-league arrests for possession. As Cristi tells one of his superiors, he doesn't want to ruin some kid's life just because the police are bored; yes, he's technically guilty of smoking weed, but don't the cops have bigger fish to fry?

Plus Cristi has just had a minor epiphany while on his honeymoon in Prague, where the drug possession laws have been considerably loosened. It's only a matter of time, he figures, until this liberalization comes to Romania, too. No sense in enforcing a law that's about to become obsolete anyway.

It's this idealistic belief that leads Cristi straight into one of the film's many long, single-take scenes — a funny but increasingly awkward confrontation with a senior officer who takes almost perverse delight in having his staff look up words in the dictionary. Porumboiu relishes in this kind of bone-dry wit, which is so lackadaisical and understated it takes a minute to realize that what you've

just seen was meant to be funny. His camera is lethargic but sure-footed; there's something strangely satisfying about watching a scene like the one where Cristi comes home to his wife playing a song full volume. He sits through the whole thing — at least five minutes, uncut — while eating dinner in another room, then slowly walks over to her, plops down on the couch, and announces that the song's lyrics make no sense. This is a cop so methodical that he won't even tease his wife without first doing the research.

Of course, there are enemies of introspection in the film, too. They go by the name of Everyone In The Police Department Except For Cristi. These are guys who have no patience for his highfalutin moral code whatsoever. It's significant that Cristi's wife is a grammar teacher; like her, his bosses at the precinct follow not only the letter of the law, but also the tense, gerund, and something called the negative pronominal adjective.

And try as you might, you just can't win a war against grammar.

FILM • COMMENTARY

Cartoon Shocker



**FREEDOM OF CHOICE (R, 85 MIN)
COUNTERCULTURE CARTOON
PACKS A PUNCH, SO DON'T
WATCH IT WITH YOUR GRAND-
MOTHER, BUT DO WATCH IT**

Over the past 30 years animation has enjoyed a welcomed renaissance within film culture. From Pixar to Studio Ghibli, the number of diverse, artistic-driven animation films have risen dramatically because the perception that drove the "animation is just for kids" label has thankfully disappeared.

However, there was a time 40 years ago when Disney was the only cartoon game in town until one man successfully challenged the Mouse

motion, live-action and still photography within an eye-popping array of sex, violence and politics. *Coonskin* is a one-of-a-kind masterpiece that would incite audience riots if shown in theaters today. Bakshi intended the film to be anti-idiot and used vulgar cartooning to explore cultural, political and social issues within the extremely popular (and successful) gangster-friendly genre. Bakshi incorporated animated characters over still and live-action imagery, giving the film a psychedelic quality that effectively counters the shocking thematic concerns presented.

Bakshi was labeled as "that cat that made those dirty Disney flicks" after the success of *Fritz and Traffic*, and in many ways *Coonskin* is Bakshi giving the finger to everything that is proper and correct in society.

A word of warning: *Coonskin* packs quite a punch. It's one of the most successful films of the first counter culture era to deal with power, politics and race issues. The film doesn't

FIND COONSKIN ON YOUTUBE.COM

that Roared with a Cat that attacked That man is Ralph Bakshi. Remembered primarily for the counter-culture classics *Fritz The Cat* and *Heavy Traffic* (a film banned by the Alberta Censorship Board), Bakshi's great unknown masterpiece, *Coonskin*, is a no-holds-barred urban folk tale inspired by the writings of novelist Chester Himes and 1970's graffiti culture.

Coonskin tells the story of Brothers Rabbit, Bear and Fox as they escape their poverty-stricken southern roots and soon rise to the top of the Organized Crime ladder in Harlem. Told in episodic fashion, mixing ani-

malism to the bleeding-heart liberalism that is the tried and true formula when Hollywood attempts anything it feels is "important with meaning." *Coonskin* proudly wears its vulgarity on its sleeve; a juke-joint film possessed with a viper-energy containing a seedy core that wants to mess with your mind and break your heart. It's uncompromising like all great art should be. Sadly, Ralph Bakshi is virtually forgotten today, an unrecognized master whose work helped shift creative culture of the past 30 years. *Coonskin* tells a truth that few films will ever have the guts (or talent) to tell.

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NEW THIS WEEK

CELINE: THROUGH THE EYES OF THE WORLD

This musical documentary lets fans relive international superstar Celine Dion's 2008/2009 Taking Chances World Tour, a concert with the second largest ticket sales (second only to Madonna) in history.

SHUTTER ISLAND

Leonardo DiCaprio plays a U.S. marshal in the 1950s, sent to investigate the escape of a murderess from Boston's Shutter Island Ashecliffe Hospital. But he's finding opposition from the doctors, whose treatments range from unethical to absolutely sinister.

POLICE ADJECTIVE

Camera d'Or-winning director Corneliu Porumbescu tells of a young undercover cop struggling with his conscience. If he arrests a young teen and ruin his life for selling hash to classmates, which he sees as merely irresponsible, or disobey orders and face censure from his superiors.

SHOWTIMES FEBRUARY 19-25, 2010

QARNEAU		VALLEYVIEW 2:30		PG
MAY 11 (MONDAY) • 10:00/10:30P		7:30, 9:30, 10:30am Sat Sun 1:00, 3:30, 10:30pm Sat Sun		
CRASH HURT	14A	SOUTHERN DILEMMA	14A	
Alpha 1:45, 1:55 Sat 5:30am-10:00m		Alpha 1:00, 1:30, 2:00am Sat Sun 12:30, 3:30, 10:30pm		
Genre: mystery		Genre: action, not recommended for young children		
PRINCESS		WOLFEHAM	14A	
Sat 7:30, 9:30, 10:30am • 10:00/10:30P		Alpha 1:00, 1:30am Sat Sun 1:00, 3:30		
Genre: action		Genre: action, not recommended for young children		
THE TROOP: FRODO BAGGINS		WATASKI/MURKIN CINEMA 4 PLEX	PG	
Alpha 1:00, 1:30 Sat 5:30am-10:30P		3:00/4.00am • 7:00/7:30P		
Genre: fantasy		Genre: fantasy, 12-15, violence, some language		
A SONG MAN	14A	FROM PAST WITH LOVE	14A	
Alpha 1:00, 1:30 Sat 5:30am-10:30P		Alpha 1:00, 1:30am Sat Sun 1:00, 3:30pm		
Genre: action		Genre: action, not recommended for young children		
PRECIOUS	14A	FOOTY FIGHT	14A	
Alpha 1:00, 1:30 Sat 5:30am-10:30P		Alpha 1:00, 1:30am Sat Sun 1:00, 3:30pm		
Genre: action, drama, language, violence		Genre: action, not recommended for young children		
THE IMAGINATION OF PAUL BRANTON	PG	PETER JACKSON AND THE OCEANOGRAPH: THE OCEANOGRAPH TRAIL	PG	
Alpha 1:00, 1:30 Sat 5:30am-10:30P		Alpha 1:00, 1:30am Sat Sun 1:00, 3:30pm		
Genre: fiction, 10-12, 13-15, 16-17, 18-19, 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, 70-79, 80-89, 90-99, 100-109, 110-119, 120-129, 130-139, 140-149, 150-159, 160-169, 170-179, 180-189, 190-199, 200-209, 210-219, 220-229, 230-239, 240-249, 250-259, 260-269, 270-279, 280-289, 290-299, 300-309, 310-319, 320-329, 330-339, 340-349, 350-359, 360-369, 370-379, 380-389, 390-399, 400-409, 410-419, 420-429, 430-439, 440-449, 450-459, 460-469, 470-479, 480-489, 490-499, 500-509, 510-519, 520-529, 530-539, 540-549, 550-559, 560-569, 570-579, 580-589, 590-599, 600-609, 610-619, 620-629, 630-639, 640-649, 650-659, 660-669, 670-679, 680-689, 690-699, 700-709, 710-719, 720-729, 730-739, 740-749, 750-759, 760-769, 770-779, 780-789, 790-799, 800-809, 810-819, 820-829, 830-839, 840-849, 850-859, 860-869, 870-879, 880-889, 890-899, 900-909, 910-919, 920-929, 930-939, 940-949, 950-959, 960-969, 970-979, 980-989, 990-999, 1000-1009, 1010-1019, 1020-1029, 1030-1039, 1040-1049, 1050-1059, 1060-1069, 1070-1079, 1080-1089, 1090-1099, 1100-1109, 1110-1119, 1120-1129, 1130-1139, 1140-1149, 1150-1159, 1160-1169, 1170-1179, 1180-1189, 1190-1199, 1200-1209, 1210-1219, 1220-1229, 1230-1239, 1240-1249, 1250-1259, 1260-1269, 1270-1279, 1280-1289, 1290-1299, 1300-1309, 1310-1319, 1320-1329, 1330-1339, 1340-1349, 1350-1359, 1360-1369, 1370-1379, 1380-1389, 1390-1399, 1400-1409, 1410-1419, 1420-1429, 1430-1439, 1440-1449, 1450-1459, 1460-1469, 1470-1479, 1480-1489, 1490-1499, 1500-1509, 1510-1519, 1520-1529, 1530-1539, 1540-1549, 1550-1559, 1560-1569, 1570-1579, 1580-1589, 1590-1599, 1600-1609, 1610-1619, 1620-1629, 1630-1639, 1640-1649, 1650-1659, 1660-1669, 1670-1679, 1680-1689, 1690-1699, 1700-1709, 1710-1719, 1720-1729, 1730-1739, 1740-1749, 1750-1759, 1760-1769, 1770-1779, 1780-1789, 1790-1799, 1800-1809, 1810-1819, 1820-1829, 1830-1839, 1840-1849, 1850-1859, 1860-1869, 1870-1879, 1880-1889, 1890-1899, 1900-1909, 1910-1919, 1920-1929, 1930-1939, 1940-1949, 1950-1959, 1960-1969, 1970-1979, 1980-1989, 1990-1999, 2000-2009, 2010-2019, 2020-2029, 2030-2039, 2040-2049, 2050-2059, 2060-2069, 2070-2079, 2080-2089, 2090-2099, 2100-2109, 2110-2119, 2120-2129, 2130-2139, 2140-2149, 2150-2159, 2160-2169, 2170-2179, 2180-2189, 2190-2199, 2200-2209, 2210-2219, 2220-2229, 2230-2239, 2240-2249, 2250-2259, 2260-2269, 2270-2279, 2280-2289, 2290-2299, 2300-2309, 2310-2319, 2320-2329, 2330-2339, 2340-2349, 2350-2359, 2360-2369, 2370-2379, 2380-2389, 2390-2399, 2400-2409, 2410-2419, 2420-2429, 2430-2439, 2440-2449, 2450-2459, 2460-2469, 2470-2479, 2480-2489, 2490-2499, 2500-2509, 2510-2519, 2520-2529, 2530-2539, 2540-2549, 2550-2559, 2560-2569, 2570-2579, 2580-2589, 2590-2599, 2600-2609, 2610-2619, 2620-2629, 2630-2639, 2640-2649, 2650-2659, 2660-2669, 2670-2679, 2680-2689, 2690-2699, 2700-2709, 2710-2719, 2720-2729, 2730-2739, 2740-2749, 2750-2759, 2760-2769, 2770-2779, 2780-2789, 2790-2799, 2800-2809, 2810-2819, 2820-2829, 2830-2839, 2840-2849, 2850-2859, 2860-2869, 2870-2879, 2880-2889, 2890-2899, 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THE WOLFMAN

A young nobleman returns to the English hamlet where he grew up to find his missing brother. But an official from Scotland Yard also arrives to investigate an evil beast that's been killing townsfolk under the full moons. Mysterious mayhem ensues.

VALENTINE'S DAY

Featuring an all-star Hollywood cast, Valentine's Day explores this holiday, the commercial influences, romance, heartbreak and various pressures inevitably involved.

PERCY JACKSON & THE OLYMPIANS:

THE LIGHTNING THIEF
Learning he is the descendant of a Greek god, a high school student becomes embroiled in a battle between the gods while embarking on a mission to find his missing mother and Zeus's lightning bolt. Harry Potter goes to ancient Greece, anyone?

CRAZY HEART

Bad Blake's a country singer on a steady slide into obscurity behind the new country sensation he once mentored. Bad pours what little heart he has left into Jean, a small-town reporter and single mom who just can't help but become wrapped up in Bad's gruff but sweet sensibility.

DEAR JOHN

Savannah falls for John, a Special Forces soldier. When 9/11 strikes, John's sense of duty promises to keep them apart for an insufferable period and the two exchange countless handwritten letters as the time passes.

FROM PARIS WITH LOVE

John Travolta plays Charlie Wax, a top U.S. government operative whose methods are unorthodox. Wax is sent to Paris to break up a terrorist ring that is threatening to disrupt an African aid summit.

A SINGLE MAN

Love interrupted, isolation and life's little things are played out during a day in the life of George Falconer (Colin Firth), a college professor struggling to find meaning to his life after the death of his long time partner.

AVATAR

James Cameron might actually be more excited by the release of his movie than the rest of us put together. Starring Sam Worthington, Zoe Saldana and Sigourney Weaver, this film percolated in his mind for 15 years until the technology to make it happen finally caught up.

THE BOOK OF ELI

In a post-nuclear winter, Eli (Denzel Washington) is armed with a powerful and sacred book and a young disciple (Mila Kunis.) They soon encounter a semi-socialized desert town lead by Carnegie (Gary Oldman) who wants the book for himself.

EDGE OF DARKNESS

Mel Gibson returns in this crime thriller as Thomas Craven, a Boston detective who is investigating the killing of his activist daughter. Unravelling her secret life, Craven also uncovers corporate and political corruption and conspiracy, which someone is desperate to erase.

THE IMAGINARIUM OF DOCTOR PARNASSUS

With the extraordinary gift of guiding imaginations, Doctor Parnassus III also cursed having traded his daughter to the devil in exchange for immortality in this captivating imaginative race against time. Dr. Parnassus must undo the mistakes of his past in a never-ending landscape of surreal obstacles!

★★★★☆

WHEN IN ROME

This rom-com features a legendary fountain of love in Rome. When a young, single New Yorker visits the city, she makes off with a handful of coins from the fountain with a trail of hopeful suitors following in her wake. ★★☆☆

[illegible]

LATIN INDO JAZZ - PREVIEW

Leader Of The Band

LOCAL JAZZ DRUMMER SANDRO DOMINELLI RETURNS AS A BAND LEADER WITH HIS FOURTH RELEASE

SANDRO DOMINELLI TWO CD RELEASE

At the Yardbird Suite, Feb. 19 and 20

BY SCOTT LINGLEY

Funny that Sandro Dominelli should sound almost apologetic about the fact his latest recording has taken so long to come about. It's not as though the Edmonton-based drummer, band leader and producer has been sitting around playing Xbox for the past four years.

Just take a look at the events section of his website and, starting with a photo of Dominelli with Joan Rivers, you'll get a snapshot of the energy and adaptability on which Dominelli's reputation as an artist and performer, now approaching its third decade, was built. Recent weeks have seen him zipping between gigs as sideman and leader up and down the province, and soon he'll head off for a gig at the Vancouver Olympics.

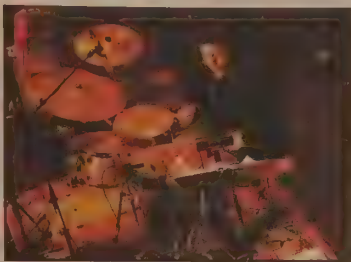
At present, though, Dominelli's mind is on his new album, the fourth released under his name and the first since 2006's ambitious *Passages*. Recorded in New York City last fall, *The Alto Sessions* unites the drummer with guitarist Rez Abbasi and electric bassist Chris Tarry. But more than an annual meeting of musical minds, Dominelli says the record represents an exciting moment in his life.

"The inspiration was love," says the gregarious drummer.

While getting ready to record in the Big Apple, Dominelli also got engaged and has since been married. He credits his spouse with encouraging him to go back to the studio as leader after a long stretch of contributing his talents to other people's projects. The experience let him reflect on his musical struggles and triumphs and to feed off the tremendous energy of New York City's jazz tradition.

"I chose to record later in my trip and the reason why is, I wanted to check out a lot of music, and that was very inspirational," Dominielli says.

The Alto Sessions' eight tracks were captured in just two long days in the studio after Dominelli spent five months on preproduction in Edmonton. Though he'd played a few times with bassist Tarry, who also held down the low end for multiple-award-winning Canadian fusion supergroup Metalwood, the drummer had never shared a stage with guitarist Abbasi, known as a band leader and player with his wife, Punjabi folksinger Kiran Ahluwalia. Despite their lack of collaborative history, Dominelli knew he had the right players to return as a band leader.



The busy Dominelli is an Edmonton jazz scene fixture. PHOTO BY BYRON WONG

"The music in my head was jazz meets Latin meets Indo-Pakistani music and I think at points we achieve that, then at times we sound like a straight-ahead jazz trio and at times like a progressive rock band. I've learned to accept that what I'm doing now is where I am today and where I'll be in two years, I don't know. But I've learned to accept it and embrace it."

The album certainly reflects a diversity of influences and accomplishment of the performers, ranging over three Dominelli originals, two from collaborator Marc Beaudin, one from Tarry, one by Keith Jarrett and Chris Isaak's "Wicked Game."

"Sounds like a band, eh? I'm pretty proud of that," he enthuses. "But at rehearsals, we ended up doing more talking than we did actual playing. There's a lot of commonality between us. We grew up with the same kinds of music and we're around the same age, so we could talk Led Zepplin or Madonna or Bill Frisell and be on the same page. Maybe that's

why we sound like we're a band."

Dominelli says he's looking forward to reuniting with his 'band' for the CD release this weekend, with local piano phenom James Clarke and his trio as the opening slot. It's particularly meaningful for the drummer to launch his new CD from the Yardbird stage, a site essential to his creative growth.

"The Yardbird Suite has been an amazing place for me and my peers for years and years. They bring in quality acts from all over the world and we get the opportunity sometimes to back them up. It's the same language, music, but you learn, you know, Alberta compared to Newfoundland, there's an accent there are idiosyncrasies within that language, and that's the beginning of us as Alberta jazz musicians, getting the experience to work with different artists."

Dominelli is also pleased to be helping out the Youth Emergency Shelter Society by donating a dollar from every CD sold at the release party.

3 ACADEMY AWARD NOMINATIONS

The Young Victoria
Nightly 7:00pm
SAT & SUN
MATINEES @ 1:15pm
RATED: PG

1 ACADEMY AWARD NOMINATION

A Single Man
Nightly 9:00pm
SAT & SUN
MATINEES @ 3:15pm
RATED: PG MATURE SUBJECT MATTER NOT RECOMMENDED FOR CHILDREN

8 ACADEMY AWARD NOMINATIONS

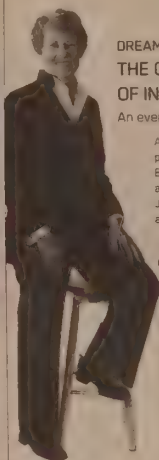
Precious
Nightly @ 8:50pm
SAT & SUN
MATINEES @ 1:00pm
RATED: 14+ SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND DRUG LANGUAGE, DRUG USE, SMOKING, CONTEMPT

2 ACADEMY AWARD NOMINATIONS

The Imaginarium Doctor Parnassus
Nightly @ 9:10pm
SAT & SUN
MATINEES @ 3:30pm
RATED: PG COARSE LANGUAGE, FROTHY DREAM SCENES

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An evening with Dr. Roberta Bondar

Astronaut, scientist, physician, photographer Dr. Roberta Bondar's diverse career has always followed her passion. Join us for an evening of insights and inspiration.

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6:30 pm Reception with light refreshments
7:00 pm Evening keynote

Location: Shaw Theatre, NAIT Main Campus
1762-126 Street, Edmonton

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ROOTS • PREVIEW

The Yellow Rose Of Alberta



Gurf Morlix (left) and Sam Baker (right) on stage. (PHOTO BY JOHN DUFF/OMAX PHOTOGRAPHY)

TEXAS DUO TREATS US TO THEIR ROOTS AND GATHERS WINTER GEAR FOR THE NEEDY. BUT WHAT IS A TOQUE?

TOQUES FOR TEXANS

Sam Baker and Gurf Morlix, Haven Social Club, Peds. 72

BY MARLISS WEBER

If there's one thing that Sam Baker, Gurf Morlix and I agree on, it's that life would be well-spent split between Edmonton and Austin, Texas.

"That's kind of the ideal life right there, isn't it?" the smoky-voiced country bluesman Baker says. "Then you could have your gorgeous Edmonton during the summer, and Austin during the winter and the spring. April is amazing with all the wildflowers here."

Yes, this man enjoys his wildflowers along with his whiskey-soaked roots and blues.

His partner in crime (for this tour, anyway) Gurf Morlix, is a big fan of all things Albertan. "Our music and Alberta just seem to go hand in hand. It feels like home, because there are so many similarities between Texans and Albertans."

Similarities that seem to go deeper than the oil and gas industry and ranching connections. "There's a real down-to-earth nature, and a generosity that always makes us feel like we're at home," says Baker. "And you know, the first time we ever landed in Alberta, it was in Calgary, and honestly, I couldn't believe we had just been on a plane for hours, because it looks just like home."

Except for one tiny detail. "Yeah, I can't help but think it's kind of funny that we're coming to Edmonton in February," says Morlix. "We picked a cold time to come."

Baker says, with real concern in his voice, "I hear that your eyelashes will freeze in the cold. Does that really happen?"

But despite the cold, Morlix and Baker are looking forward to sharing their unique brand of country-blues-roots with Albertans and warming up the winter for some homeless shelters all the way.

"We're doing this thing," says Baker, "called Toques for Texans." We're collecting warm winter gear, and then we'll donate it all to shelters before we leave. I'm quite curious, actually, to see a toque, as I've never seen one before, to my knowledge. I mean, will we find them at the airport? Because I'm pretty sure I'm going to need one."

Toques aside, both Baker and Morlix come from 40 plus years of playing and living the music they create. Accomplished musicians, both of them play many instruments, sing and write songs, and Morlix was recently named Instrumentalist of the Year at the Americana Music Awards in Tennessee.

Baker continues to use his music as a means of coming to terms with death and mortality, after having been seriously injured in a terrorist attack in Peru more than 20 years ago. "I'm still dealing with it," he says. "Dealing with almost dying of watching other people die. But music is a great outlet for that. Maybe someday I'll write a novel or something, but music just cuts to the emotion, and it helps me process it. That's one of the reasons why I do it, and why I'm still doing it."

And love is the other reason. Both men consider themselves lucky to be career musicians and wouldn't have it any other way. "I've done many jobs along the way," says Baker. "I've been a bank examiner and a white-water boatsman and a carpenter. But music is the best job I've ever had."

Morlix says, "It's taken me 40 years to write the kind of songs I like, and now I just like playing them for people."

Q: Waddle you do?

A: Swim, fish, skate, toboggan...

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STEM Cell Artist Hits Hard



WILDLIFE FISH GRIWOLSKY

ARTIST LEAVES STEM CELL FEST AUDIENCE ON THE BRINK OF TEARS — AND KATZ GIVES US ANOTHER REASON TO CRY

Part of this year's STEM Cell media arts festival, Daniel Barrow surpassed whispered hype this weekend. The Montreal-based artist uses an overhead projector and literally hundreds of transparencies of drawings he's made, which he manipulates live while telling emotionally frank, factually-skewed autobiographies. For example, Barrow clearly was not actually tracing sleeping people through their living room windows until he was murdered by a serial killer. And yet his sad, soothing, defeatist narratives contain a lot of hope, starting with the fact of their own eloquence, both in word and image. He states out loud in his queer little whisper all he really wants to do is make people cry, which he does

Feeling a little cosmic, a few of us enjoyed *Rocket Robin Hood* and his merry band of space adventurers lethargically fighting off sleep underneath a bunch of smoke-emitting moon mushrooms. The episode is actually a clip show of flashbacks from other episodes, including at one point nothing more than RHH and Little John screaming in a flipping-about spacehip. The other jaw-dropping show over the weekend was Concealer — Old Reliable's Mark Davis and the saucy Miss Mannered squirming on a stack of keyboards. Playing at the Empress, the two renowned leads of us of Joy Division ■ the point of making us dance about it. Edmonton has yet another freaky-good band, it seems, with Davis' familiar and brooding country vocals suddenly plunging into a creepy nightmare of haze and sorrow, effective under dim lighting. Ensure you see them soon.

And why not some socially-funded Oilers chat? Tell me what's wrong with these quotes from Daryl Katz' *Journal* article Sunday "There has been a suggestion that I have some how broken my pledge regarding a new arena," he writes. "This is untrue." After a word setting up his bid to buy the team, Katz writes, "Here

is what I said in a Katz Group news release issued on March 25, 2008: 'Daryl Katz, founder and chairman of Rexall Sports, has pledged to contribute his time, energy and on the order of \$100 million toward the development of a new downtown arena following his acquisition of the Edmonton Oilers'."

Um, ok then. Thanks for providing evidence of — read it again — a now "untrue" pledge to put "\$100 million toward the development of a new downtown arena." Not "complex," but "arena." He admits seeing how people may have read the "comment" differently.

Anyway, the debate continues. Please don't presume to tell the city how property taxes you'd owe on your developments anyway be spent repaying a booster loan, where the city takes the risk and you take all the building's profits.

All these banal details need to go — but why not throw in free core parking, solving the actual, at-heart problem, solving the sputtering downtown, really making our city better instead of charging us to add more of what we already have?

Otherwise, proceed with our blessings. Mr. Katz, because who doesn't love new buildings?

Especially those spewing, among more pleasant folks, thousands of revved-up, littering, drunks into our streets?

HOT TICKETS • THIS WEEK'S MUST-SEE SHOWS



Woodhands' Dan Werb and Paul Banwart (PHOTO SUPPLIED)

Woodhands With Brass/Tronaut

The Workshop | Wednesday, Feb. 24

Right up front "Woodhands" sounds like some kind of disease or affliction, a lack of affinity towards musicianship maybe. I thought it only fair to let the Woodhands duo of Dan Werb and Paul Banwart know, assuming that, you know, they'd never heard that one before.

But the Toronto pair is good natured and circumspect about their place in the musical wilderness.

They are no laptop-based indie rock outfit, favouring old-school analog synths and real drums. Being in an electro pop dance act is fun. Web admits, but their roots are still very much punk rock.

"I was never a dance club kid myself, but we find ourselves in dance clubs now," Werb says. "People in clubs are on so many different trips for so many different reasons, and that's part of what makes the experience so strange for me. Everyone's idea of a good time is so different."

Woodhands' latest dance angst manifesto *Remoscape* explores dark corners of the club set and how Werb and Banwart fit into it, or don't.

Adding a lyrical, more message-based component to the tracks has reached a non-dance audience, striking different emotional



chords

"Unlike Dan, I was a former rave kid," Banwart says. "Every band I've ever been in I've tried taking in that direction. I actually find that a lot of the music you typically hear at nightclubs never explores the range of emotions that are actually at play in the club. It's very dissociated, with one angle: sex and getting 'high.' There's so much more to it than that."

Within a nightclub experience, perhaps abetted by alcohol and drugs, anything goes. It's only when the veil is lifted that prejudices of the real world come creeping in. Woodhands celebrates the joys of fucking and fantasizing on tunes like "Sluts."

"It's probably the most objective of all the songs on the new album," Werb says. "That's about reclaiming that word and the whole notion of promiscuity. In principle, someone who believes they're open-minded will say that whatever people do with their own bodies, as long as they're not hurting anyone, is their own business. But we still stigmatize people who like to fuck and that isn't right."

"Women go through so much more shit than being sexually active than guys do," he continues. "I think it's because people are scared they see it as a sign of weakness. It doesn't have to be empowering. There's so much wanted to say with this song. Really, it's the start of a conversation." — Yuri Wiersch

Don't Google Yourself



Jesse Gervais, David MacInnes and Trevor Schmidt in *I Google Myself* (PHOTO SUPPLIED)

DESPITE FUNNY MOMENTS AND AN INTERESTING SET-UP, I GOOGLE MYSELF'S SCRIPT FAILS TO TAKE OFF

I GOOGLE MYSELF

Directed by Tammy Isaacson, starring Trevor Schmidt, Jesse Gervais and David MacInnes
Varscona Theatre, until Feb. 11
★☆☆☆

BY MICHAEL HINGSTON

A big part of the appeal of googling your own name is, I think, the hope that you'll feel some kind of camaraderie with your online namesakes — that, despite whatever evidence

you may have to the contrary, you'll discover you are part of a larger network. It's a support mechanism, as well as a vanity project.

So why does *I Google Myself*, a play devoted to just such an uplifting endeavour, feel like a swift punch to the stomach? This mawkish and histrionic 2007 work by Jason Schaffer (helmed here by Northern Light Theatre's Tammy Isaacson) brings together three identically-named characters — a painter, a gay porn star, and a car mechanic/poetry blogger — in the name of making real-world connections. Unfortunately, the connections made are

in all the wrong places, with all the wrong people, and for all the wrong reasons.

Their shared name is never disclosed, instead we meet One (the painter), who arranges an initial meet-up with Two (the porn star), whose stage name turns out to be an alias, stolen from his former high school bully. Three (the mechanic). One starts off by nervously explaining his theory about names and numerology, but before long declares his idolatrous love for Two, who flatly turns him down. (Turns out he's straight when off camera — he only does gay porn because there's more money in it.) But in the process Two accidentally lets slip the high-school-bully secret, which gives One all the ammo he needs to set off on a misguided quest to connect a string of cosmic dots that only he can see.

The characters are surprisingly and gruesomely unlikeable: fame-grubbing, narcissistic, and devoid of any kind of relatable humanity. Trevor Schmidt (One) and Jesse Gervais (Two) have no problem getting into the script's comedic frequency; it's too bad the jokes remain unfunny. David MacInnes (Three) fares a little better

GOOGLE cont'd on p. 19

Take Courage!



Human rights take centre stage in the Citadel's *Courageous* (PHOTO SUPPLIED)

COMEDY MAKES THE SERIOUS SUBJECT MATTER OF THE CITADEL'S NEW PLAY EASILY ACCESSIBLE

COURAGEOUS

By Michael Healey, directed by Richard Shee
Starring: Ari Cohen, Michael Healey, Erin MacIntyre, Melissa MacPherson, Citadel Theatre, Feb. 20-Mar. 14

BY AMY NEUFELD

What happens when two people's rights come into direct conflict with each other? Whose right is "righter"? These are questions designed to make thinking computers explode, and they are also the inspiration behind Michael Healey's new comedic play *Courageous*, a co-production with the Citadel Theatre and Toron-

to's Tarragon Theatre.

Healey was inspired to write *Courageous* after attending a conference on the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 2007. The play (which will be the second in a trilogy) tackles two different stories in two acts, with each act loosely connected to the other through brief character interactions and environment. Act One explores gay rights when a same-sex couple looks to be married by a Catholic Justice of the Peace, and Act Two examines immigrant rights through the character of a Somali refugee.

Actor Melissa MacPherson kindly takes time out of her vacation in Atlanta to talk to me about the show.

COURAGEOUS cont'd on p. 19

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cbc.ca/edmonton

ARTS NEWS • FINDING COMMON GROUND

Edmonton Common Ground Art Society presents:
The Edmonton Show
 Avenue Theatre (Feb. 18 and 19)
 doors open at 6:30. Show is for 18+

It's a pretty frequent thing to hear people complain about the arts in Edmonton problems like artist exposure, accessibility, and the promise of better prospects over yonder. Edmonton's own Nicholas Mayne, Patrick Lundeen, and Simon Gorsak constitute the Edmonton Common Ground Arts Society, and they are giving artists a big reason to stick around.

"When you get out of high school there aren't really a lot of opportunities staring you right in the face, you could be a visual artist... you could be a musician... you could go to open mics and this and that," says Gorsak, "but that's not a gateway to a professional career of any calibre... it's a hard life and you're putting in blood sweat and tears... we wanted to get into something a little more tangible."

Therefore, the ECGAS presents The Edmonton Show, a monthly showcase of local artists ranging from live musical performances and visual arts to theatre and dance. The crew put in many hours to clean up the newly renovated Avenue Theatre and is proving to be an instrumental force in the revitalization of Alberta Avenue. "So what did it take to kick-start the proverbial heart?"

"After high school, I entirely left the arts scene," Gorsak says. "Then while I was working at the Citadel, I met a lot of starving actors, they were telling me 'You don't want this life, it's too hard to live.' You don't know when your next paycheck's coming... I loved acting, I loved theatre, and I loved film but I needed to be more secure than that, and to know that all of my hard work wasn't just being laughed at."

The ECGAS has its roots in the Common Ground cafe run by Mayne while he was attending Victoria Composite High School. The cafe had a mix and a stage, and before Mayne



The Edmonton Common Ground Arts Society guys create their own work. PHOTO: JEFFREY LUNDEN

and Lundeen took off for school in Montreal, they threw a big variety show not unlike their newest creation. "After Nick left the high school, the people who were running it sort of stopped caring and it fell apart," says Gorsak. "While they were out there, [Lundeen] was organizing cabaret events for different charities. He and Nick reunited and caught up, and asked 'what could we do? We want to do something just like this, there are so many talented artists we know,' they had the resources, they had the connections, what's stopping them?"

Indeed it looks like there isn't a whole lot in their way, both opening evenings present a huge host of impressive acts — including some opening remarks from Mayor Stephen Mandel on Thursday night. Words like "stop" have been removed from the ECGAS vocabulary altogether. "We don't want it to seem like it's something that's exclusive or unattainable, if you're an artist and you're out there, come register with us so that we know you exist, we can check out your stuff and we can put you in the next show."

So singing for a night of entertainment, and if you're so inclined, these guys will be more than happy to mouth that "nice" standing artist! "That's where we came up with the common ground to not only have all the patrons on the same level as the artists, but the artists on the same level with each other. Break down that fourth wall and open the lines of communication," says Gorsak.

COURAGEOUS (cont'd from p. 18)
 I catch her on the phone just after she has finished eating "copious amounts of meat" at a Brazilian meat buffet. "The thing I find interesting about this play is it really brings to light the grey areas of life pertaining to rights," MacPherson says. "[It's] a human play in that it deals with the issues of rights in practice and how things may not be as cut and dried as we hope they are."

The issues that Healey tackles in *Courageous* are often presented in dramatic (rather than comedic) form, and I'm interested in how the comedy affects the message.

"I think [the comedy is] what makes it more accessible for everyone because life is funny at the same time as being complicated," MacPherson says. "People respond well to it because as humans we have to take the tragedy of circumstance and try to make light of it."

Citadel audiences will see a slightly different cast than the one that debuted in Toronto, and playwright Michael Healey will be joining the production for his Edmonton run.

GOOGLE (cont'd from p. 18)

still, imbibing bits of real sympathy into his character and generating the production's only genuine laughs.

For a show so concerned with computer culture, Google itself has a complete tin ear for what online speak actually sounds like. There's a scene where One and Two are sitting at their computers and communicating via instant messenger, their word bubbles projected onto a screen, and it's like no dialogue you've ever

seen before. Despite the fact that One has been actively stalking him for weeks, Two never fails to respond in perfect full sentences with every capital letter and period intact. Patrick Marber pulled off this type of scene with much more credibility in *Closer* — and that was back in 1997.

Occasionally Isaacson's production comes up with a clever take on technology, as when a driving scene is accompanied by a trek through Google Street View. But mostly it's all about

as subtle as Brendan Nonny's set design, which consists of a giant cardboard MacBook the characters walk across.

In fact, once you strip away all of the 21st-century gadgets, you're left with the makings of a rudimentary soap opera — complete with cocky Hollywood producers, a sinister paraplegic, and a trio of characters all secretly in love with one another. The only thing missing is an evil twin or two.



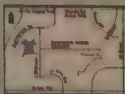
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IMPROV

CHOMPPOV VARDUNA THEATRE, 10239-47 Ave. H, hosted by Round Fire Theatre Every except the last Sat of the month. 7pm. Info: www.chompov.com
DI-NASTY VARDUNA THEATRE, 10239-47 Ave. H, improv comedy. Mon 7:30pm.
THEATREPOST VARDUNA THEATRE, 10239-47 Ave. H, weekly improv show hosted by Round Fire Theatre. Every Sat. 8pm. Info: www.theatrepost.com

READINGS & LECTURES

ALBERTA'S HEALTH CARE: WHAT PEOPLE WANT CENTRAL LOCAL SENIORS CENTRE, 1110-13 ST. FEB 19 A discussion based on M.A.'s Bluebook and Reader's Digest. 10am. Info: www.albertahealthcare.com
BARBARA REED WOODCOCK PEARL, 10420-10 Ave. H, Feb 19. A lecture and author describes the process of illustrating a book. 7:30pm.
BUDISM LECTURE: A PHILOSOPHY FOR LIVING ST. EDMUND CATHEDRAL, 1017-17 AVE. FEB 20, 10pm



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GERALD S. MAIR (CRAFTSMAN) 1020-47
AVE. FEB 19 The author hosts a book signing for his books,
"Sons on White" and "A Well-Remembered Union".
7pm.

HEALTH CARE CHALLENGES ST. PETER'S UNITED CHURCH,
1020-47 AVE. FEB 19 A public forum discussing issues facing
Albertans in the changing health care system.
7pm.

NOZZART: EXPLORING THE MASS STRAFTOWN COUNTRY
LIBRARY (SHERWOOD PARK MALL), 220 SHERWOOD BOULEVARD
SHERWOOD PARK, FEB 19 The Making of a Moment. The first
part of the series. 7pm. Info: 424-3533

OLIVE SWEET AGENCY'S BOOK, 1020-47 AVE. FEB 19
The author presents his new novel, *After the Snake*.
7:30pm.

PETTY KIDNAPERS 8:00pm, 1017-17 AVE. Every
Tuesday and Wednesday. 8pm. Info: 902-9000

PROTECTING OUR LAND: THE EDMONTON AREA LAND
VISITORS' REPORT. ALBERTA ENVIRONMENT AGENCY, FEB 19
A presentation by the Edmonton Area Land on ensuring
land sustainability in Edmonton and the surrounding
area. 7pm. Info: www.alberta.ca

ROBBIE SPURTHILL 8:00pm, 1017-17 AVE. Feb 19
Info: 902-9000

SUBSIGHT SPECTER LIGHT AND LIFE SAVING
MAGAZINE LIMITED, 1020-47 AVE. FEB 19 An
opportunity for people wanting to balance their
lives making a business case that is nurturing. 7:30pm

AND 22:00pm at 9pm. Sat. 10:00pm at 11pm. Info: 428-7018
ZAB SHUGH TRAVELERS ARTS DANCE, 1020-47 AVE.
FEB 19 The start of the television show, *Urban Sketcher* on
the Peace House a discussion on multiculturalism and the
arts. 7pm.

EVENTS

53 WAYS TO LEAVE YOUR LOVER LUTHER, 1020-47 AVE.
FEB 19 A night of love's darkest desires. 7pm. Info: 424-3533

ARTS MARKET CRAFTS COMMUNITY ARTS COFFEE HOUSE
and 9:00am. Artists and vendors sharing art and gifts.
Thursdays. Every Sat. 10am. Info: www.artsmarket.com

CHINESE NEW YEAR DINNER & CONCERT CANTON
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CITY CENTRE MALL, 1017-17 AVE. FEB 19 Dazzling
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festival foods on the lower level of the west food court by
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COMMUNITY ART NIGHT HAWKNEY CENTRE, 5704-
100 AVE. Admission: 7pm. 6:30pm to 9pm. Feb. 19-20
DRIP IN YOGA SHALA 1017-17 AVE. 10:00am-12:00pm

Mon-Fri 9am-10pm. Feb. 19-20
THE EDMONTON SHOW MUSIC THEATRE, 9020-10 AVE.
FEB 19 A variety of artists, the music, theatre, a variety
show featuring dance, improv, music, and film. 6:30pm.
Info: www.edmontonshow.com

FAMILY ART NIGHT HAWKNEY CENTRE, 5704-100 AVE.
Feb. 19, 6:30pm-9:00pm. Info: www.familyartnight.com

FARMER'S MARKET ALBERTA AGRICULTURE MALL, 5704-100 AVE.
Every Friday. 9am-12pm. Info: www.albertafarmersmarket.com

FIRST ANNUAL COMMUNITY BUILDING CONFERENCE
RAMADA HOTEL KINGSWAY, 1034 KINGSWAY AVE. FEB 20
A conference on building communities presented by the Action
For Healthy Communities. 9am-12pm. Info: 424-3533

M&K-MIME M&K CENTRE FOR THE PERFORMING
ARTS, 4300-100 AVE. FEB 19 A performance
by the professional mime artists. 7pm. Tickets: www.mimemusic.com

OCHO PAINT GALLERY 1017-17 AVE. FEB 19
Feb. 19-20 Art and show and sell. With 100s of
contemporary, modern, and photographs. Info: www.ochoart.com

READER'S THEATRE PEARL, 10420-10 AVE. FEB 20
7pm. Info: 424-3533

SILVER STAR FESTIVAL HAWKNEY CENTRE, 5704-
100 AVE. FEB 19 A festival of culture, art, sport, and recreation.
Info: 488-7600 www.silverstarfestival.com

SPORTSWORLD ROLLER SKATING GLENDALE
MALL, 5704-100 AVE. Feb. 19, 7pm, Sat. 10am, and 7am.



MEETINGS

ANA 12-STEP SUPPORT GROUP BRASSERIE
PACIFIC, 1017-17 AVE. FEB 19 A 12-step
meeting to support people with alcohol and
drug problems. Mon 7:30pm.

BOOK CLUB CANTON CASINO ARTS COFFEE HOUSE,
1020-47 AVE. FEB 19 Monthly meeting. Wed. 6:30pm. Info:
424-3533

EDMONTON NATURE CLUB ALBERTA MUSEUM,
1015-101 AVE. FEB 19 Monthly meeting. Wed. 6:30pm. Info:
424-3533

FAMILY PEEP SUPPORT GROUP IN GROUP HALLWAY
BUILDING, 600-1017 AVE. A support group for individuals
who know someone living with mental illness. Feb. 19, 4:30pm

NEW CANADIAN PARENTS GROUP WILL HOST
LUNCH, 2230-101 AVE. A support group immigrant parents
having difficulty adjusting to life in Canada. Feb. 19, 12:30pm.
Overseas Affairs, Public Affairs, Feb. 19, 12:30pm.

OVERSEAS AFFAIRS PUBLIC AFFAIRS, FEB. 19, 12:30pm.
Info: 424-3533

WOMEN'S SUPPORT GROUP 1017-17 AVE. FEB 19, 7pm. Info: 424-3533

WOMEN'S SUPPORT GROUP 1017-17 AVE. FEB 19, 7pm. Info: 424-3533

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SAVAGE (cont'd from p. 26)

— why would her weight and the limitations it places on what's possible in bed factor into your decision to take this relationship "to the next level," as the life coaches/douchefags like to say? Don't make the mistake of assuming the choice you face is one between some hypothetical skinny bitch with no restrictions and this big woman who comes with some restrictions. Everyone has their own limits, their own capabilities, their own tastes and preferences, SD, and only a handful of us wind up in long-term relationships with partners without any restrictions whatsoever. As for how to talk to her about her weight: Well, based on the furious and furiously defensive mail that pours in whenever the subject of weight comes up, I'd suggest you discuss it through a bulletproof glass partition. Or you could launch that real relationship, move in with her, and presuming you eat decently and get regular exercise yourself, set an example of the kind of lifestyle choices that will bring down her weight and up her game.

I am a straight male. I have a problem ejaculating with a partner. I have failed to complete the act even when I arranged a session with two well-known porn stars I REALLY wanted. This despite sticking it nearly everywhere — no Greek — and in nearly every position. The only way I can reliably come is when I hump my mistress naked with a towel underneath me. What is my problem? I take Zolof, which can have the effect of delaying orgasm, but that doesn't explain how I can get off so quickly with my towel, which I do daily, but I couldn't get it done in an entire hour with my favorite big-butt porn star who let me do whatever I wanted.

Fucking A Towel

First, a stroll down memory lane: Hearing anal sex referred to as "Greek" took me back to the days when I was a 13-year-old closet case reading the personal ads in the back of a purloined copy of the Advocate, wondering what the fuck fags meant when they described themselves as "Greek active" or "Greek passive," and why it was that Greek activists invariably described themselves as "French passive." It all seemed so mysterious and continental. Now, everyone is either a top or a bottom and romance is dead.

Moving on, FAT, it pains me to inform you that you've ruined your dick with that towel-and-mattress routine. You've trained your dick to respond to one kind of stimulation and one kind of stimulation only, a particular kind of stimulation that has very little in common with the sensations provided by big-butt porn stars. Your only hope is to stop

humping the bed. Get some lube; use your left hand; use your right hand; invest in a Fleshlight; masturbate on your back, standing up, kneeling. Vary your masturbatory routine and habits and — this is the hard part — don't resort to the towel and mattress if you have difficulty getting off. You spent a lot of time programming your dick, and it's going to take some time to reprogram your dick, FAT. The only way to do that is to deny your dick — forever and ever, amen — the towel-and-mattress routine. Once your dick realizes that there's no going back, it'll adapt; it will begin to respond to the new and closer-to-human sensations that you're making available to it. Good luck.

Find the Savage Lovocat (my weekly podcast) every Tuesday at theustranger.com/savage. mail@savagelove.net

ASTROLOGY • FEB. 18-24 • BY THE MID

CRUISIN' THE COSMOS

AQUARIUS (JAN 20 - FEB 18)

The fact you can't get your regulations through has little or nothing to do with you. Just so you know where things are at, it's cause a couple superior men haven't spat. One's obstinate and domineering while the other's completely consumed by caviar and if somehow you can make the peace, your gear's quickly getting the grease!

PISCES (FEB 19 - MARCH 20)

Sometimes your school just won't take you where you wanna be gear, even if it's clearly a better dream than that you're shovin' them. That's why you haven't have a complete, albeit temporary, permit to transform into an eel, the aquatic equivalent of a snake. If you want your way to win, ditch the fins and be as sneaky as it takes!

ARIES (MARCH 21 - APRIL 19)

Are you willin' to risk your life for your country? That's your patriotic. For your family and home? That's your basic. How 'bout your wallet? Well, now that's plain morose. This week, don't get dragged into a passin' match with a snake, especially over what's just turn out to be tomorrow's junk!

TAURUS (APRIL 20 - MAY 20)

Well, who's? So you finally get what you were after. Well, duh. For a workhorse like you who won't give up, winnin' the war ain't gonna be the part that's hard. What's gonna be difficult is keepin' the territory you've conquered so far 'cause once you let up

to protect it, you can't ever let down your guard!

GEMINI (MAY 21 - JUNE 20)

Remember the movie *Bat Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*? Well, like them, your just is about to catch up to you on the edge of a cliff with a creek far below you. And now you find out that Sundance can't swim. Sure, the river's mighty fast, but just like him, you ain't got no other option than to jump right on in!

CANCER (JUNE 21 - JULY 22)

Be very wary after the weekend and avoid making any purchases, agreements or decisions 'cause they won't work out your way. The Moon'll make you an easy mark, like a fruit ripe to be plucked. Be careful when dealin' with folks if you don't wanna get fooled!

LEO (JULY 23 - AUG 22)

It seems the tables have turned and you're no longer a middle-cheatin' cat, but it's you who's caught in a corner like a cat. Well, a cat wouldn't just stand there and meow — it'd show you just what to do. As long as you're playin' the role, you can escape through even the smallest of holes!

VIRGO (AUG 23 - SEPT 22)

Before you settle into a comfortable pace, you should know a treaty don't end the arms race. It just puts it underground for a while to buy time to secretly stockpile. Consider yourself forewarned. This ain't

the calm before or after, but between the storm!

LIBRA (SEPT 23 - OCT 22)

You haven't lost yet, Libra. The key to winnin' is economics. Have a city under siege? Cut off the food supply. Tough competition? Buy 'em out. Sports? Purchase the best players and equipment. In other words, where's there's a bill, there's a way. Right now, what you should be focusin' on is puttin' some ones!

SCORPIO (OCT 23 - NOV 21)

Forgettin' about David and Goliath. Occasionally escape it when your best interests lie. Sorry, pal. Life ain't always a fairy tale that ends happily ever after, and sometimes singin' rock at punts only incurs their wrath. It's not matter if you're big or small, this week you ain't winnin' a fight with city hall.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV 22 - DEC 21)

Been noticein' as of late some friends have begun to reevaluate? Like the of blues singin' sets, nobody knows you when you're down and out. Well, no one in your past 'cause at least you know now there's a few real friends you don't have to ditch. — the ones who continue to call, even when you have no flash, stick as cash as all!

CAPRICORN (DEC 22 - JAN 19)

This week would be a good time for you to bone up on your Mark Twain, as you're about to be on either the receiver or giver of the ol' Tom Sawyer scam. Hopefully now that you've read this and are down with the program, it'll be the former and not the latter. Otherwise, wear some clothes that can get adjusted.

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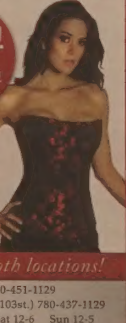
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SINGLE LOVE DAN SAVAGE

HE MAY CLEAN THE LATRINE WITH HIS TOOTHBRUSH BUT HE SEEMS TO BE HAPPY

My boyfriend and I have agreed to abide by whatever decision you make. We've been together for nine months. We are gay. We live in a college town. We both found jobs here after we graduated, so we stayed. Since his sophomore year, my boyfriend has had an "arrangement" with an older man, a professor at the university. Did I say older? I meant old. We are in our mid-20s; this man is in his late 60s. The old man comes to my boyfriend's apartment once a week and cleans it. Does his laundry. Washes his dishes. He actually pays my boyfriend for the privilege. It's not much, \$50, and the old perv says it's for my boyfriend's

"time," since a part of their deal is that my boyfriend has to be in the apartment while the old perv cleans it. He's particularly pervy about how he cleans my boyfriend's bathroom. Dan, the old perv cleans my boyfriend's toilet bowl with his own toothbrush, which he then uses to brush his teeth the rest of the week!

There is no sex. (Presumably, the old perv goes home and beats off after cleaning my boyfriend's apartment.) None of this would matter if my boyfriend and I weren't talking about moving

student housing. My boyfriend says he likes the clean apartment more than he needs the money (and that's true, now that he's no longer a starving student). But I say all good things must come to an end, and if I'm moving in, we'll have to clean up after ourselves or pay a real cleaning lady to come around once a week, like regular people. We agreed to leave it up to you. Dan: The old perv stays? The old perv goes?

Toothbrushes Are For Teeth

much more reasonable fee than most sex workers would charge for the same service (yes, your boyfriend is doing very low-level sex work)—and while the toothbrush/toilet thing is a bit... creepy... and unsanitary... I'm sure you'll get used to it and/or be able to put it out of your mind. (Although I'd be giving the toilet an additional wipe-down if anyone—young, old, hot, not—were cleaning it for me with a ratty old toothbrush.) Let's recognize this arrangement for what it really is: a successful long-term relationship. How many

one-year mark.

And I think you knew, TAFT. I think you knew I would side with the perv—was there ever any question?—which leads me to believe that you're secretly okay with this arrangement and an extra \$50 a week to put toward household expenses, money that you can invest in cases of Clorox Wipes. You wanted a little plausible deniability, a way for the arrangement to continue without having to give it your blessing, and needed some cover. And now you have it, TAFT.

I'm in a friends-with-benefits arrangement with a woman I get along with really well, and I am interested in a real relationship. I know she's open to it, but there's one thing holding me back. She's overweight. And while it doesn't matter to me, it restricts what's possible in bed. Do I talk to her about it? If so, how?

Some Dude

If this woman's weight didn't interfere with a friends-with-benefits arrangement—a purely sexual bargain

LET'S RECOGNIZE THIS ARRANGEMENT FOR WHAT IT REALLY IS: A SUCCESSFUL LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIP. HOW MANY RELATIONSHIPS—GAY OR STRAIGHT, MONOGAMOUS OR OPEN, WHERE TOILETS ARE SCRUBBED WEEKLY WITH TOOTHBRUSHES OR CLEANED SPORADICALLY WITH TOILET BRUSHES—LAST SIX YEARS!

in together. I want this "arrangement" to stop. I don't feel comfortable using a toilet that a man old enough to be my grandfather cleaned with his toothbrush. This has been going on for six years—the old perv has been cleaning up after my boyfriend since he was living in

The old perv stays.

By allowing this man to clean his apartment, TAFT, your boyfriend is making an old perv very, very happy, and that makes the world a more joyful place generally (and your boyfriend's apartment a tidier place particularly). Your boyfriend isn't taking advantage of the old perv—\$50 is a

relationships—gay or straight, monogamous or open, where toilets are scrubbed weekly with toothbrushes or cleaned sporadically with toilet brushes—last six years! Sorry, TAFT, but I'm constitutionally disinclined to dissolve a successful six-year relationship in favor of a relationship that has yet to reach the

SAVAGE cont'd on p. 25

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Mersades Hatter, three, takes her turn in a shootout during the Heritage Lakes 2010 Family Day Winter Games in St. Albert.

PHOTO BY BEN LEMPHERS/EPIC PHOTOGRAPHY

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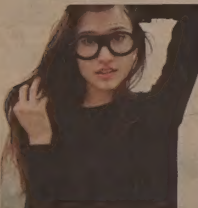
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We photographed Christina in Frazier Park, just 90 minutes north of LA, this January. She wears the Knit Sweater Crew Neck Dress, new Wide Stripe Thigh-High Socks and Vintage Glasses.

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